

EISENHOWER BIRTHPLACE

— STATE HISTORIC SITE —

Denison, Texas

Post-Visit Guide

High School

Overview: Preservation as a Civic Responsibility

In this lesson, students will learn about the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act and investigate the Eisenhower Birthplace site's nomination form for the National Register of Historic Places.

U.S. History TEKS

(7) History. The student understands the domestic and international impact of U.S. participation in World War II. The student is expected to:

(G) explain the Home Front and how American patriotism inspired exceptional actions by citizens and military personnel, including high levels of military enlistment; volunteerism; the purchase of war bonds; Victory Gardens.

(29) Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology. The student is expected to:

(A) use a variety of both primary and secondary valid sources to acquire information and to analyze and answer historical questions;

(B) analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing and contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations, making predictions, drawing inferences, and drawing conclusions;

(D) use the process of historical inquiry to research, interpret, and use multiple types of sources of evidence;

(30) Social studies skills. The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms. The student is expected to:

(A) create written, oral, and visual presentations of social studies information.

Materials

- 1966 National Historic Preservation Act for display/distribution
- Eisenhower Birthplace National Historic Register form
- Plaque image for display/distribution
- Activity worksheet

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Activity: National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966

15 minutes

Provide students with **copies of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966**. Explain that this Act, passed in 1966, created the National Register of Historic Places, which is the United States' official list of places worthy of preservation. According to the NHPA, historic places define the spirit of American culture. The Eisenhower Birthplace was placed on the National Register in October 2016.

Give students time to read the document. Facilitate a class discussion by asking for a summary of the act. Discuss any questions students may have or additional areas of research into historic preservation.

Activity: Nominating Ike's Birthplace

20 minutes

Distribute/display the Eisenhower Birthplace **National Register nomination form, plaque image, and worksheet**. Divide the class into small groups or have students work in pairs to complete the activity.

Share responses when the activity is complete. Assess and extend student understanding by discussing the following questions:

- Early restorations of the birthplace site including clearing many existing neighboring houses in order to create a park space. Discuss how these efforts that changed the neighborhood's footprint were both beneficial and detrimental to the community.
- How has preservation of the site and the resulting heritage tourism contributed to the economy in Denison?
- How is the story of Eisenhower's Birthplace a story of community pride and national patriotism?
- How can preservation activity continue to benefit Denison?

Answer Key:

1. National Parks Service under the Department of the Interior
2. statewide
3. Answers will vary.
4. Carpenter Gothic
5. Denison Garden Club and Gold Star Mothers
6. Amon G. Carter, Sid W. Richardson, Web Maddox, Houston Harte, Oveta Culp Hobby, Fred Conn

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Assessment

Evaluate student participation in NHPA discussion and National Register nomination form investigation for accuracy and completion.

Lesson Extension

Encourage students to think about unique places in their community that should be protected, such as houses, parks, bridges, schools, commercial districts, archaeological sites, etc.

Have students work individually or in groups to choose a local site to visit and research for potential nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Students may want to search the National Register first to ensure that their chosen site is not already listed. (Download and search the “Spreadsheet of NRHP Listed Places” file, available at <http://www.nps.gov/nr/research/>.)

Have students develop presentations on their selected site and its potential for nomination. The class may wish to select one of the presented sites and prepare and submit an NRHP nomination form.

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Activity Resource: The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

Public Law 89-665, as amended
Section 1 (16 U.S.C. 470)

- (a) This Act may be cited as the “National Historic Preservation Act.”
(b) The Congress finds and declares that-

- (1) the spirit and direction of the Nation are founded upon and reflected in its historic heritage;
- (2) the historical and cultural foundations of the Nation should be preserved as a living part of our community life and development in order to give a sense of orientation to the American people;
- (3) historic properties significant to the Nation’s heritage are being lost or substantially altered, often inadvertently, with increasing frequency;
- (4) the preservation of this irreplaceable heritage is in the public interest so that its vital legacy of cultural, educational, aesthetic, inspirational, economic and energy benefits will be maintained and enriched for future generations of Americans;
- (5) in the face of ever-increasing extensions of urban centers, highways and residential, commercial and industrial developments, the present governmental and nongovernmental historic preservation programs and activities are inadequate to insure future generations a genuine opportunity to appreciate and enjoy the rich heritage of our Nation;
- (6) the increased knowledge of our historic resources, the establishment of better means of identifying and administering them and the encouragement of their preservation will improve the planning and execution of federal and federally assisted projects and will assist economic growth and development; and
- (7) although the major burdens of historic preservation have been borne and major efforts initiated by private agencies and individuals and both should continue to play a vital role, it is nevertheless necessary and appropriate for the Federal Government to accelerate its historic preservation programs and activities, to give maximum encouragement to agencies and individuals undertaking preservation by private means and to assist State and local governments and the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States to expand and accelerate their historic preservation programs and activities.

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Activity Resource: Eisenhower Birthplace NRHP Form, page 1

NPS Form 10-900

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Eisenhower Birthplace

Other name/site number: Eisenhower Birthplace State Historic Site

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

2. Location

Street & number: 720 S. Lamar

City or town: Denison

State: Texas

County: Grayson

Not for publication: ☐

Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this

☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:

☐ national ☒ statewide ☐ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

<input type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Local
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Federal

Category of Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: NA

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Activity Resource: Eisenhower Birthplace NRHP Form, page 2

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

X	A	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
	B	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
	C	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
	D	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations: C (birthplace)

Areas of Significance: Conservation

Period of Significance: 1942-1958

Significant Dates: 1942, 1944, 1946, 1953, 1958

Significant Person (only if criterion b is marked): NA

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion d is marked): NA

Architect/Builder: Unknown

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Activity Resource: Eisenhower Birthplace NRHP Form, page 3

Narrative Description

The Eisenhower Birthplace at 720 S. Lamar Avenue in Denison, Texas, is a Carpenter Gothic house which was built circa 1877 and occupied by the Eisenhower family from 1888 to 1892. The one-and-a-half-story L-plan frame dwelling features a full-façade porch, and three projecting cross-gables on the front elevation. Situated on a corner lot with mature trees and a non-historic outbuilding, the nominated 0.35 acre property is part of the Eisenhower Birthplace State Historic Site, owned by the State of Texas and managed by the Texas Historical Commission. The house is in excellent condition and retains a good degree of integrity.

Statement of Significance

The Eisenhower Birthplace at 720 South Lamar Street in Denison, Texas, is the house in which Dwight D. Eisenhower was born in 1890. In 1942, General Eisenhower first became a national figure for his role as Commander of U.S. forces in Europe, spurring Denison residents to identify the precise location of his birth. Local citizens, most notably members of women's groups including the Denison Garden Club, and Gold Star Mothers, soon began efforts to preserve the home as a historic site. The City of Denison purchased the property in 1945, and efforts to furnish, beautify, and interpret the significance of the house were underway when Eisenhower visited the property in 1946. Public interest in the birthplace surged upon Eisenhower's election as President in 1952, and in 1953 a statewide foundation formed to raise funds for the building's restoration, and the transformation of the surrounding residential neighborhood into a park. In 1955, the city deeded the property to the Eisenhower Birthplace Foundation, which completed restoration and transferred the property to the State Parks Board in 1958. Today the birthplace is part of the Eisenhower Birthplace State Historic Site, operated and maintained by the Texas Historical Commission. The property is nominated to the National Register under Criterion A, in the area of Conservation, at the state level of significance in recognition of the successful efforts led by the citizens of Denison to purchase and restore the house, establish a museum, and host President Eisenhower during his visits to the place he was born. The period of significance is 1942 to 1958. The property meets Criteria Consideration C (Birthplace) because it derives its primary significance for its later discovery, preservation, and transformation into a state-owned historic site.

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Activity Image: Birthplace Plaque



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Activity: Nominating Ike's Birthplace

Use the NRHP form and plaque image to answer the following questions

1. What government agency administers the National Register of Historic Places?
2. For which level of significance was the Eisenhower Birthplace nominated?
3. Read all four National Register Criteria (A-D). Explain why this registration form was submitted under Criteria A rather than any of the other criteria.
 - Why A:
 - Why not B:
 - Why not C:
 - Why not D:
4. Read the Narrative Description. What is the architectural style of the house?
5. Read the Statement of Significance. What local women's groups were largely responsible for the preservation efforts of this site?
6. As detailed in the Statement of Significance, the Eisenhower Birthplace Foundation deeded the property to the Texas State Parks Board in 1958. Who were the members of the Foundation Board at that time?

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